

# A Pilot Study of Trauma Informed Training and Formulation Sessions for Junior Doctors

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## Introduction

A trauma informed organisation seeks to realise links between trauma and mental health, recognise signs of trauma in staff and service users, resist re-traumatisation and respond to trauma at all levels of the system (Treisman, 2017). Trauma informed approaches help develop relationships between clinical staff and trauma survivors (Sweeney, 2018). This approach encourages the use of formulation to help understand a person's difficulties within the context of their past experiences. We used focused teaching followed by case formulations to help junior doctors to become more trauma informed in their practice.

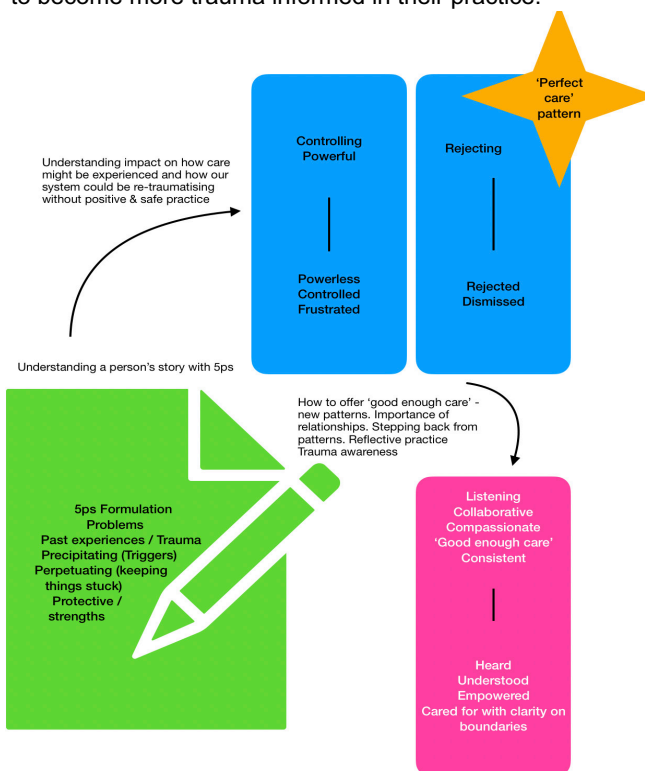


Figure 1

## Method

14 trainee doctors (including foundation, GP, and core psychiatry trainees) based in Bolton mental health services received two 90-minute teaching sessions on 'Understanding Personality Disorder' and 'Trauma informed care'. This was followed by fortnightly 90-minute group case formulation sessions, run jointly by a psychiatrist and a psychologist. The 5Ps Model (Logan, Nathan & Brown, 2011) was used to structure the presentation of cases and interpersonal 'reciprocal roles' were identified to look at relational aspects of the case (Ryle & Kerr, 2020) as shown in Figure 1. Likert scales were completed before and after the training to assess confidence in trauma informed care. 10 doctors completed a qualitative interview about the training. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and analysed using Thematic Analysis (Braun and Clarke, 2017).

## What was most helpful about the programme?



Figure 2

## Results

The response rate was 71%. All doctors reported an increase in confidence scores. Overall, 3 themes were generated from the interviews as presented in Figure 2.

## Conclusion

Doctors reported an increase in knowledge and confidence in the principles of trauma informed care following this training approach. Junior doctors reported that it led to more trauma informed ways of approaching their work and increased compassion towards patients. The structured framework using the 5Ps model and reciprocal roles helped doctors to reflect on the feelings evoked within themselves, in their clients and in the wider system. The function of the group was reported to support wellbeing.

"A lot of us have been in difficult situations, it's easy to be negative, by doing the formulation it gives a different perspective as to why someone behaves the way they did."

"As a Junior we would often shy away from speaking about trauma, whereas this has given me more understanding and confidence."

## References

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